

(Following is the text of the address to be delivered at the Ohio State University commencement Friday, August 27, 1965, by Dr. Robert M. Zollinger, professor and chairman of surgery at Ohio State)

FOR RELEASE: 10 A.M. EST, FRIDAY, AUG. 27, 1965

Vice President Weaver, Members of the Board of Trustees,
the Faculty, The Graduating Class, Friends, Relatives,
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is truly an honor for me to be asked by the distinguished President of our University to address you on this memorable occasion in your lives. When this University calls one of her sons to speak at such an occasion, she honors him as well as his academic sires and associates, young and old alike.

I am pleased to join with the Board of Trustees, the Administration, the Faculty, and your families and friends, in saluting and congratulating the graduates assembled here in this arena. You are about to be recognized by one of the largest and foremost universities in this country. I suspect that many of you may now understand what the late Will Rogers ⁽¹⁾ had in mind in his remarks years ago to the alumni of Columbia University. He suggested that students like yourselves spend their first two college years in deciding which courses to take of the several thousand that are offered, and the next two years or so in finding the building where these courses are given. Then they have the rest of their lives to wish they had taken other courses!

Commencement Address delivered August 27, 1965 at Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

The fact that two out of five of this graduating class are here to receive advanced degrees is consistent with the trend toward more and more education. In these times of increasing concern about our national intellectual resources, it is refreshing and reassuring to see so many of you here for recognition of your academic achievements. You have come from a variety of backgrounds in education, nationality, and spheres of interest. I take this occasion to urge each of you to continue the process of learning, to develop interests outside your special fields, to be true to yourself as an individual, and to sustain a strong loyalty to your University to insure added opportunities for your successors.

The hurdles provided by the many examination^s and the soul-searching theses and dissertations, which I dare say you have not forgotten, must now be replaced by hurdles of your own design, so that you will sustain a high level of up-to-date knowledge throughout your lives. Your presence as a graduate on this occasion insures that you have the necessary qualities for yearly improvement as referred to by Oliver Wendell Holmes. As he said in a graduation talk in 1871 at Bellevue Hospital, "The young man finds it easier than his seniors to accept the improvements which every year is bringing forward. New ideas build their nests in young men's brains.

Revolutions are not made by men in spectacles. . and the first whispers of a new truth are not caught by those in need of an ear-trumpet. Granting all these advantages to the young man, he ought, nevertheless, to go on improving every year until he has ripened into a well mellowed maturity. But, to improve, he must be good for something at the start. "

Graduation imposes added personal responsibilities upon all of you. As President of the American College of Surgeons a few years ago, I asked the incoming Fellows to do more for their profession, although they were already pressed for time, and I would make the same request of you. The thoughtful solution of life's problems and responsibilities will require from each of you, one of your most valued possessions--TIME!

You should set aside a certain amount of time at regular intervals to continue the process of learning. I am not talking now about the social and civic obligations that most of us fall heir to sooner or later. You should give at least one-tenth of your time as a tithe to improve the career which you represent and to fulfill your obligations to your fellow man.

If this amount of time shocks you, then perhaps you should recall the many days a year the leaders in your field as well as others spend attending meetings and performing functions which have insured you of the great opportunities to be found in the universities and elsewhere.

Tithing of time for reading and attending meetings, just as you have been doing in the University will be required to sustain and improve your competence. As Francis Bacon⁽²⁾ said: "Reading maketh a Full Man; Conference a Ready Man; and Writing an Exact Man, and therefore, if a Man Write little, he had need have a great memory, if he Conference little, he need have a Present Wit; and if he reade little, he had need have much Cunning, to seem to know that, he doth not."

You have much to gain personally from tithing your time and efforts to insure professional growth and additional contributions. Furthermore, those of you in the sciences must meet the challenge of scholars and educators who have expressed concern over the need of a broader and more sustained interest in the humanities. In this space age people in the sciences have had unusual opportunities, and their opinions and suggestions have found ready ears. However, I must remind you of the importance and durability of the humanities.

Those of you whose origins are from older civilizations and countries, or who have traveled in older countries than ours, realize that the artists, the musicians, the poets and the philosophers, to mention a few, have been revered through the ages.

Many of you are of the teaching professions and I suspect that you have foregone your summer vacations to continue your education. Recent studies show a definite increase in the years of education of our younger population. This is most encouraging, and so is the growing emphasis on continuing education for somewhat older persons in all fields. The University's "Center for Tomorrow" is a bright new symbol of this emphasis.

I hope that those of you who accept teaching responsibilities will sustain a high standard of excellence for your students. Like many of you, I am ashamed that I can speak only one language. Our fading image abroad might be much brighter if the millions * of tourists going overseas, as well as our government representatives in all fields, had mastered one or more foreign languages during their pre-college years.

Admiral Hyman Rickover ⁽³⁾ has spoken out on this subject of raising educational standards. I suggest that the teachers among you adopt a similar stand, even though many parents may aggressively resist your demands for a high academic output for little Johnny. Such parents must come to realize that other countries dedicated to the destruction of our way of life make higher demands than we do upon students of all ages. We had better wake up to our responsibilities and support those among you who will make a genuine effort to insure more and more replacements of high quality in the honored seats you occupy today.

Besides improving your proficiency in your own fields, I would remind you, as educated men and women, of the need to develop secondary interests, as so many before you have done.

From time to time we all might benefit from a personal inventory in which we ask ourselves--what else can I do well? I for one am interested in horticulture and I recall a distinguished predecessor in this field, John Gerard, at the age of 24, was admitted to the freedom of the Barber Surgeon Company and in the year 1569 was granted the privilege of establishing his own practice.

He had outstanding horticultural interests and was the first to publish a catalogue of plants in 1596. A second edition published three years later was dedicated to Sir Walter Raleigh, who had brought back to his estate in Ireland the first white potato and tobacco from Virginia. This catalogue by barber surgeon Gerard helped to lay the foundation for modern botany, pharmacy and horticulture. The precedent for making contributions both within and without an individual's field of interest, has been well established over the years.

On the topic of individualism, I assure you that your Alma Mater looks to you to ^mimprove the lot of mankind by your creative thinking, be it in the humanities or the sciences! We of the faculty trust that you will not blindly accept ^san ultimate truth all that you have been taught in the various colleges of ~~this~~ University. Actually, a teacher hopes that progress will make invalid tomorrow what you have been taught today. We hope that you have been stimulated by your educational experiences at this University to develop your own ideas. Once developed and tested, we hope that you will have the courage to stand by them, whatever they may be!

I happen to think that a crusader for new ideas and concepts has the potential to make far more lasting contributions than the mental pigmy with his docile, "me too" outlook. Rugged individualism has slipped a good deal in popularity in recent years, but I am among those who believe that these few souls are the corner stones for our future development.

I for one regret that on the Fourth of July my grandchildren must sit down on the grass behind a roped off area and wait until precisely 9 o'clock in the evening for someone else to have all the fun shooting off fireworks. I have pleasant memories of my grandfather setting off dynamite on top of a large stone^f in Fairfield County to properly celebrate the Fourth of July after the supply of firecrackers has been exhausted. This was a concession to grandmother since a few windows had been shattered the previous year from using dynamite caps on the barn hill. Grandpa wasn't with it insofar as the physics of sound was concerned, but he sure was patriotic! I think I benefited from these rugged risks grandfather took, although he knew grandma would make his life miserable for a time. Perhaps we have a safer Fourth of July today from one aspect of this regimentation, but the rising toll of injuries from traffic and riots should make us stop and think!

In any case, I am completely serious in expressing the hope that you can use your abilities and ideas to the utmost without giving up your own identity to the fad of the moment.

I hope that each and everyone of you will sustain a strong long-term interest in your University. We have long been considered in some quarters an institution that is slaphappy over athletics. According to the legend, our engineering college spends its time devising new plays, while the College of Medicine patches up fallen gladiators and the faculty in the humanities work overtime tutoring athletes. Let me say here and now that no one likes to see his team lose, and I like to have the number one team come from Ohio State University! I am sure we would all agree that it is important to maintain a balance, and we must strive to make every college on this campus number one in the nation!

On the subject of balance, we should not forget, after all, that ours is a young University. This came through to me clearly two months ago as I observed graduation exercises at Charles University in Prague, Czechoslovakia. This university now going into its 700th year, takes pride in the fact that its students stopped the advance of the Swedish army on the Charles Bridge.

The inspiration ~~to~~ be obtained from visiting this old and distinguished university contrasted sharply with the melancholy regimentation to be found outside. Anyone who finds himself being carried away with admiration for types of governments ~~which~~ on the surface may have appeal, should obtain firsthand information by visiting such countries. Such visits are good for a person's own orientation, and they certainly make him more sympathetic with the problems of many other peoples of the world. These visits also make him very proud and happy to come back home.

I implore you as new graduates of this University not ~~to~~ be discouraged by socio-economic trends of the time, but to carry on the noble traditions of your special field of endeavor. Your very best efforts in the service of mankind are needed to improve the image of this country among the peoples of the world. As some of you strive to improve health and prolong life, others must seek solutions to the economic problems created by these scientific advances. I say to each of you that the world should be a better place as a result of your efforts. Your Alma Mater anticipates your achievements with pride!

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